

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MUNICH 03307

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, BU
SUBJECT: ALLEGED ABORTIVE COUP IN BULGARIA LAST MONTH

1. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY. RFE MANAGEMENT HAS RECEIVED REPORT INDICATING THAT IN EARLY JUNE BULGARIAN AUTHORITIES ARRESTED SERIES OF PERSONS IN SOFIA AND PLEVEN WHO WERE ENGAGED IN EFFORT TO TOPPLE THE ZHIVKOV REGIME. CONSPIRATORS ALLEGEDLY FAVORED MAINTAINING BULGARIA'S PRESENT SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND ALLIANCES WHILE REDUCING DEGREE OF COUNTRY'S DEPENDENCE ON USSR, DISBANDING AGRO-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEXES, AND DECENTRALIZING INDUSTRY. RFE MANAGEMENT CONSIDERS SOURCE RELIABLE AND HONEST PERSON WHOSE INFORMATION MAY OR MAY NOT BE ACCURATE. END SUMMARY.

2. A PHYSICIAN OF BULGARIAN BIRTH PRESENTLY RESIDING IN FRANKFURT WHO TRAVELS TO BULGARIA RATHER FREQUENTLY HAS INFORMED THE RFE BULGARIAN SERVICE CHIEF OF WHAT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN AN ABORTIVE COUP D'ETAT. THE SOURCE REPORTS THAT AT BEGINNING OF JUNE, 1978 NUMEROUS PERSONS AFFILIATED WITH BULGARIAN COMMUNIST PARTY AND AGRICULTURAL UNION WERE ARRESTED IN SOFIA AND PLEVEN. SOURCE ACQUIRED THIS INFORMATION IN VILLAGE OF HIS BIRTH WHICH IS LOCATED IN
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VICINITY OF PLEVEN.

3. AIM OF CONSPIRATORS, WHOSE RANKS REPORTEDLY INCLUDED SOME BULGARIAN ARMY OFFICERS, WAS TO OVERTHROW ZHIVKOV REGIME. THEY ALLEGEDLY HAD NO RPT NO INTENTION, HOWEVER, OF CHANGING BULGARIA'S PRESENT SOCIALIST ECONOMIC ORIENTATION OR ALLIANCE COMMITMENTS.

4. CONSPIRATORS REPORTEDLY WANTED TO CHANGE BULGARIA'S AGRICULTURAL STRUCTURE BY DISBANDING AGRICULTURAL COMPLEXES AND ESTABLISHING A FREER STRUCTURE ALONG GENERAL LINES OF POLAND AND YUGOSLAVIA. FARMERS WERE TO HAVE OPTION OF REMAINING IN COOPERATIVES OR BECOMING INDIVIDUAL PRODUCERS. CONSPIRATORS ARE ALSO SAID TO HAVE ADVOCATED A VAGUE PROGRAM OF INDUSTRIAL DECENTRALIZATION.

5. IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS, CONSPIRATORS ALLEGEDLY DESIRED TO REDUCE DEGREE OF THE COUNTRY'S DEPENDENCE ON THE USSR WHILE RETAINING PRESENT ALLIANCES. CONSPIRATORS ARE SAID TO HAVE BEEN STRONGLY OPPOSED TO ZHIVKOV'S ARBITRARY AND PERSONAL STYLE OF RULE.

6. SOURCE REPORTS THAT CONSPIRATORS APPROACHED TANO TSOLOV, FIRST DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL OF MINISTERS AND MEMBER OF POLITBURO, TO REQUEST SUPPORT. TSOLOV IS SAID TO HAVE BLOWN WHISTLE BY TELLING ZHIVKOV WHO HAD THE CONSPIRATORS ARRESTED BY THE SECURITY FORCES.

7. RFE MANAGEMENT CONSIDERS SOURCE TO BE HONEST AND RELIABLE PERSON WHO WOULD BE LIKELY TO REPORT ACCURATELY WHAT HE HEARD. SOURCE'S INFORMATION MAY OR MAY NOT BE RELIABLE.

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8. RFE MANAGEMENT HAS OF COURSE NO RPT NO INTENTION OF DOING ANYTHING WITH THE FOREGOING INFORMATION. CONGEN AND RFE MANAGEMENT WOULD, HOWEVER, APPRECIATE HEARING EMBASSY'S VIEWS ON THIS ACCOUNT. BETTS

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